

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF WISCONSIN**

FREDDIE T. MCLAURIN,

Plaintiff,

-vs-

Case No. 16-CV-7

**WRC MAIL ROOM and
WRC PROPERTY ROOM,**

Defendants.

DECISION AND ORDER

The pro se plaintiff, Freddie Mclaurin, is confined at the Wisconsin Resource Center (WRC). He filed a complaint under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, alleging that his civil rights were violated. This matter comes before the court on the plaintiff's petition to proceed *in forma pauperis*. He has been assessed and paid an initial partial filing fee of \$15.61.

The Court is required to screen complaints brought by prisoners seeking relief against a governmental entity or officer or employee of a governmental entity. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The court must dismiss a complaint or portion thereof if the prisoner has raised claims that are legally "frivolous or malicious," that fail to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or that seek monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b).

A claim is legally frivolous when it lacks an arguable basis either in law or in fact. *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25, 31 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 325 (1989); *Hutchinson ex rel. Baker v. Spink*, 126 F.3d 895, 900 (7th Cir. 1997). The Court may, therefore, dismiss a claim as frivolous where it is based on an indisputably meritless legal theory or where the factual contentions are clearly baseless. *Neitzke*, 490 U.S. at 327. “Malicious,” although sometimes treated as a synonym for “frivolous,” “is more usefully construed as intended to harass.” *Lindell v. McCallum*, 352 F.3d 1107, 1109-10 (7th Cir. 2003) (citations omitted).

To state a cognizable claim under the federal notice pleading system, the plaintiff is required to provide a “short and plain statement of the claim showing that [he] is entitled to relief[.]” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a)(2). It is not necessary for the plaintiff to plead specific facts and his statement need only “give the defendant fair notice of what the . . . claim is and the grounds upon which it rests.” *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555 (2007) (quoting *Conley v. Gibson*, 355 U.S. 41, 47 (1957)). However, a complaint that offers “labels and conclusions” or “formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will not do.” *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678 (2009) (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555). To state a claim, a complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted

as true, “that is plausible on its face.” *Id.* (quoting *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 570). “A claim has facial plausibility when the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged.” *Id.* (citing *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 556). The complaint allegations “must be enough to raise a right to relief above the speculative level.” *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555 (citation omitted).

In considering whether a complaint states a claim, courts should follow the principles set forth in *Twombly* by first, “identifying pleadings that, because they are no more than conclusions, are not entitled to the assumption of truth.” *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679. Legal conclusions must be supported by factual allegations. *Id.* If there are well-pleaded factual allegations, the court must, second, “assume their veracity and then determine whether they plausibly give rise to an entitlement to relief.” *Id.*

To state a claim for relief under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege that: 1) he was deprived of a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States; and 2) the deprivation was visited upon him by a person or persons acting under color of state law. *Buchanan-Moore v. County of Milwaukee*, 570 F.3d 824, 827 (7th Cir. 2009) (citing *Kramer v. Village of North Fond du Lac*, 384 F.3d 856, 861 (7th Cir. 2004)); *see also*

Gomez v. Toledo, 446 U.S. 635, 640 (1980). The court is obliged to give the plaintiff's *pro se* allegations, "however inartfully pleaded," a liberal construction. See *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89, 94 (2007) (quoting *Estelle v. Gamble*, 429 U.S. 97, 106 (1976)).

The plaintiff is suing the WRC Mail Room and the WRC Property Room. He alleges that the Mail Room refused him his calendar from "brother bob's outreach" on December 21, 2015, and also refused to deliver a Christmas card that his mother sent him on December 23, 2015. The plaintiff also alleges that the Property Room refused him "the rest of [his] property" such as his razor, brown cord, toothbrush, stamped envelopes, grease, bath powder, knee brace, and foot bowl. For relief, the plaintiff seeks monetary damages.

The plaintiff appears to allege that the WRC Mail Room censored his mail, which implicates his rights under the First Amendment. See *Procunier v. Martinez*, 416 U.S. 396, 408 (1974), overruled on other grounds by, *Thornburgh v. Abbott*, 490 U.S. 401 (1989)). The plaintiff's Property Room allegations are not entirely clear. Was the property his and was it confiscated? Is he allowed to use it at certain times? The plaintiff should clarify this claim so that the Court may better evaluate the claim.

Additionally, the plaintiff may not sue the WRC Mail Room or the

WRC Property Room. The plaintiff should file an amended complaint naming individual defendants involved in his claims. If the plaintiff does not know the names of the individuals involved, he may name them as John Doe or Jane Doe defendants, and identify them at a later date.

If the plaintiff wants to proceed, he must file an amended complaint curing the deficiencies in the original complaint as described herein. Such amended complaint must be filed on or before **March 31, 2016**. Failure to file an amended complaint within this time period may result in dismissal of this action.

The amended complaint must bear the docket number assigned to this case and must be labeled "Amended Complaint." The amended complaint supersedes the prior complaint and must be complete in itself without reference to the original complaint. *See Duda v. Bd. of Educ. of Franklin Park Pub. Sch. Dist. No. 84*, 133 F.3d 1054, 1056-57 (7th Cir. 1998). If an amended complaint is received, it will be screened pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915A.

Motion Regarding Counsel

The plaintiff has filed a request that the Court find an attorney who can talk with him. In a civil case, the Court has discretion to decide whether to recruit a lawyer for someone who cannot afford one. *Navejar v.*

Iyola, 718 F.3d 692, 696 (7th Cir. 2013); 28 U.S.C § 1915(e)(1); *Ray v. Wexford Health Sources, Inc.*, 706 F.3d 864, 866-67 (7th Cir. 2013). First, however, the person has to make a reasonable effort to hire private counsel on their own. *Pruitt v. Mote*, 503 F.3d 647, 653 (7th Cir. 2007). After the plaintiff makes that reasonable attempt to hire counsel, the court then must decide “whether the difficulty of the case – factually and legally – exceeds the particular plaintiff’s capacity as a layperson to coherently present it.” *Navejar*, 718 F.3d at 696 (citing *Pruitt*, 503 F.3d at 655). To decide that, the court looks, not only at the plaintiff’s ability to try his case, but also at his ability to perform other “tasks that normally attend litigation,” such as “evidence gathering” and “preparing and responding to motions.” *Id.*

In this case, the plaintiff has not shown that he has made any attempt to find an attorney on his own. Even if he had, the Court has simply directed him to file an amended complaint at this stage. Given the nature of his claims and his apparent ability to describe them, he is capable of doing that on his own. Accordingly, the Court will deny the plaintiff’s request for counsel.

ORDER

IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED that the plaintiff's motion for leave to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Docket No. 2) is **GRANTED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the plaintiff's motion to appoint counsel (Docket No. 3) is **DENIED**.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that on or before **March 31, 2016**, the plaintiff shall file an amended pleading curing the defects in the original complaint as described herein.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Clerk's Office mail the plaintiff a *pro se* prisoner complaint form.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Administrator of the Wisconsin Resource Center or his designee shall collect from the plaintiff's prisoner trust account the \$334.39 balance of the filing fee by collecting monthly payments from the plaintiff's prison trust account in an amount equal to 20% of the preceding month's income credited to the prisoner's trust account and forwarding payments to the Clerk of Court each time the amount in the account exceeds \$10 in accordance with 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(2). The payments shall be clearly identified by the case name and number assigned to this action.

IT IS ALSO ORDERED that copies of this order be sent to the Administrator of the Wisconsin Resource Center.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the plaintiff shall submit all correspondence and legal material to:

Office of the Clerk
United States District Court
Eastern District of Wisconsin
362 United States Courthouse
517 E. Wisconsin Avenue
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202

PLEASE DO NOT MAIL ANYTHING DIRECTLY TO THE COURT'S CHAMBERS. It will only delay the processing of the matter.

The plaintiff is further advised that failure to make a timely submission may result in the dismissal of this action for failure to prosecute. In addition, the parties must notify the Clerk of Court of any change of address. Failure to do so could result in orders or other information not being timely delivered, thus affecting the legal rights of the parties.

Dated at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, this 11th day of March, 2016.

BY THE COURT:


HON. RUDOLPH T. RANDA
U.S. District Judge